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1-22. (CANCELED)

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle having a clutch located between a drive motor and the transmission, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) carrying out a first downshifting operation from a first, higher transmission gear ratio to a second, lower transmission gear ratio during a coasting mode while the clutch is disengaged and without any engine braking of the vehicle; and one of:

(b1) terminating the first downshifting operation by engagement of the clutch, ~~located between the vehicle drive motor and the transmission~~, if a speed of the vehicle is above a predetermined threshold speed greater than zero determined by a ~~current~~ the second transmission gear ratio; and

(b2) terminating the first downshifting operation ~~without engagement of the clutch, located between the vehicle drive motor and the transmission~~, while maintaining the clutch in a disengaged state if the speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 23, wherein step (b2) further comprising the step of carrying out a second downshifting operation, while the clutch remains continually disengaged, if a reasonably great probability exists that a driver has a desire for positive drive torque as well as desiring uninterrupted travel.

25. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of determining the desire for positive drive torque by an indicator.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of indicating the desire for the positive drive torque by one or more of:

releasing operative brakes of the vehicle,  
deflecting an activation lever for a direction of travel, and  
using a steering angle of a vehicle steering mechanism.

27. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the steps of indicating the desire for the positive drive torque by using a steering angle of a vehicle steering mechanism and determining a driver's desire for the

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positive drive torque by way of overstepping of the steering angle as compared to a predetermined steering angle.

28. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of using, for a determination of the probability of the driver's wish for the positive torque, two or more of named indicators.

29. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of preventing the downshifting operation if operational brakes of the vehicle are activated.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of engaging the clutch when the speed of the vehicle is above the predetermined threshold speed, to terminate the downshifting operation, only when a power control member of the motor vehicle is activated. ←

31. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of always terminating engagement of a gear of the automatic transmission at the end of the downshifting operation with a disengaged clutch when the current gear of the automatic transmission is a starting gear.

32. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of selecting a next gear for a downshift dependent on vehicle deceleration.

33. (CANCELED).

34. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) carrying out a first downshifting operation from a first, higher transmission gear ratio to a second, lower transmission gear ratio during a coasting mode of the automatic transmission, without any engine braking of the vehicle, by: ←

disengaging a clutch located between the automatic transmission and a vehicle engine; ←

shifting from the first, higher transmission gear to the second, lower transmission gear ratio in the automatic transmission; and ←

one of:

(b1) terminating the first downshifting operation by engaging the clutch, located between the automatic transmission and the vehicle engine, if a speed ←

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of the vehicle is above a predetermined threshold speed greater than zero determined by ~~a current~~ the second transmission gear ratio so that engine compression influences the vehicle;

and

(b2) terminating the first downshifting operation ~~without engagement of the clutch, located between the vehicle drive motor and the transmission,~~ while maintaining the clutch in a disengaged state if the speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed;

(c) If the vehicle speed continues to decrease, carrying out a second downshifting operation of the automatic transmission by disengaging the clutch; ~~located between the automatic transmission and the vehicle engine;~~ by

downshifting from the lower gear to a first next lower gear in the automatic transmission and by one of:

(d1) terminating the second downshifting operation by engaging the clutch; ~~located between the automatic transmission and the vehicle engine;~~ if a speed of the vehicle is above the predetermined threshold speed so that engine compression influences the vehicle; and

(d2) terminating the second downshifting operation ~~without engagement of the clutch, located between the vehicle drive motor and the transmission;~~ while maintaining the clutch in the disengaged state if the speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed; and

determining a driver desire for positive drive torque;

and

terminating the second downshifting operation by engaging the clutch.

35. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 34, further comprising the step of determining the driver desire for positive drive torque by identifying at least one of:

releasing operative brakes of the vehicle,  
deflecting an activation lever for a direction of travel; and  
a predetermined steering angle of a vehicle steering mechanism; and  
activation of a power control member.

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36. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) entering a vehicle coasting mode, without any engine braking, by disengaging a clutch located between a vehicle drive motor and the transmission; and performing a first downshift from a higher transmission gear ratio to a next lower transmission gear ratio of the automatic transmission;

and one of:

(b1) re-engaging the ~~clutch, located between the vehicle drive motor and the transmission,~~ with the next lower transmission gear ratio to terminate the first downshift if a speed of the vehicle is above a predetermined threshold speed greater than zero determined by a current the next lower transmission gear ratio; and

(b2) maintaining the ~~clutch, located between the vehicle drive motor and the transmission,~~ in a disengaged state with the next lower gear to terminate the first downshift if a speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed; and

(c) in the event that the speed of the vehicle continues to decelerate, then:

disengaging the clutch, if the clutch is engaged;

performing a second downshift from the next lower transmission gear ratio to a second next lower transmission gear ratio,

(d1) re-engaging the ~~clutch, located between the vehicle drive motor and the transmission,~~ with the second next lower transmission gear ratio to terminate the second downshift if a speed of the vehicle is above the predetermined threshold speed; and

(d2) maintaining the ~~clutch, located between the vehicle drive motor and the transmission,~~ in the disengaged state with the second next lower transmission gear ratio to terminate the second downshift if a speed of the vehicle is below the predetermined threshold speed.

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